

SREE

YATIRAJA VIMSATI

(यतिराज विंशति)
२।

by

**Visatavak Sikhamani,
Manavala Mahamuni**

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(In English verses with glossary

By

Sri Satyamurthi Swami, Gwalior)

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Date 6-8-1972

“It is impossible to entangle the intangibilities of feeling in the coarse meshes of language”, wrote Thomas Hardy. I realise how true this statement is when I attempt this foreward to Sri Satyamurthi Iyengar Swami’s translation of, and commentaries on two of the deeply moving, religiously inspiring and philosophically profound Srivaishnava hymns (viz.) Stotra Ratnam and Yatiraja vimsati. It is especially gratifying to me to note that the author has written the commentary on ‘Yatiraja vimsati’ as had been requested by me. Words fail me to praise adequately this monumental piece. Combining erudition with devotion, he has achieved the impossible. His translation captures the spirit of the original without degenerating into pedantic, word by word rendering. The literary nuances, impeccable diction, the oriental imagery, clothed in occidental phrases and the streamlike flow of his felicitous language add a rare lustre to the translation. His prose has rhythm of poetry in it. His deep and accurate knowledge of the Sampradaya, his exact and analytical knowledge of the Vishishtadvaita philosophy, his Acharyabhakti and his Svanubhava had added, in no mean measure, to the quality of his work. Without fear of contradiction, I can say that Sri Ubha Ve. Satyamurthi Iyengar Swami is a prince among translators and his work, a gem among translations. I am really proud and consider it a privilege to write this brief introduction. It is the duty of every Srivaishnava to study, preserve and publicize these deeply moving works of our two great Acharyas.

(Sd) T. E. Sampathkumaran

6-8-72

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22nd Sept. 1972

I deem it a rare privilege to write in appreciation of the metrical rendering in English of Sri Manavala Mamuni's Yatirajavimsati, done with meticulous care and extraordinary skill, by Sriman S. Satyamurthi Ayyangar of Gwalior.

This hymn, in twenty verses, is in the form of an ardent and intimate appeal by a distinguished disciple to a distinguished spiritual giant and preceptor, Sri Ramanuja. Bringing out in lucid and chaste expression how a devotee should view and conduct himself in relation to his Acharya, this work, though small in extent, occupies a unique place in the stotra-literature of the Srivaishnava religion of the later period. All Vaishnavas, irrespective of their minor differences, can drink copiously from this hymn, which is an unending fountain-head of Acharyabhakti, *Par excellence*. The fact that this eminent work has received an equally eminent translation at the hands of Sri Satyamurthi Ayyangar is a matter of great gratification for all interested in this branch of literature.

Sri Satyamurthi Ayyangar, with a remarkable scholarship in Sanskrit and an amazing mastery over the English language and its nuances, has caught, as it were, the heart of the Author and represented its spirit in its true colour and flavour. It is true that translations have got their own limitations. But the present metrical rendering by Sri Ayyangar breathes into the work, the freshness of the original, coupled with grace and felicity of expression. The translator has evidently enhanced the value of the work with references from the works of other Srivaishnava Saints and a number of intimate details and interesting anecdotes, connected with the life of the Great Acharya and his blessed disciples, known only to the traditional students of the Visishtadvaita religion and philosophy. His wide range of knowledge in the Ubhaya Vedanta is evident throughout this work.

This work is bound to be a great boon for all scholars, in general, and the students of the Vaishnava religion and philosophy, in particular, who have been looking for an authentic and reliable study and translation of the same.

Sd/-
(M. Narasimhachary)

Vidvan

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To the present-day Vaishnavite world, led by Jagadacharya Mahamahimopadhyaya, Sriman P. B. Annangaracharya, Sriman Satyamurthi Ayyangar of Gwalior is not new. We have enjoyed his rendering into mellifluous English, many of Annangaracharya's essays and booklets. He is giving us (1) an enjoyable English Version of 'Ratna-prabha' i. e. Annangaracharya's gloss for Sri Alavandar's Stotra-Ratna, (2) his own English Commentary on Sri Manavalamamuni's Yatiraja-vimsati and (3) three appendices (i) A brief life-sketch of the author of the Stotra-Ratna, (ii) The Divine Sport and (iii) The Divine Mother. The nectarean Sweetness of the Sanskrit verses is herein well-matched by the appealing and engrossing diction of the Commentary. Though simple, it reveals a perfect comprehension which is indispensable for an impeccable interpretation. I welcome this book as a boon to the wide English-Knowing Public.

Sd/-N. Bhaktavatsalam

10-6-72

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Dated 7th June 1972.

Translation is generally a hard job and rendering in English verses, the rare gems of Sanskrit poems, composed by a master-mind, steeped in piety and devotion, is not a thing easily thought of by anyone. Sri S. Satyamurthi Iyengar has succeeded in conveying, in sweet English verses, all the ideas and literary embellishments abounding in 'Ethiraja Vimsati' of Saint Manavala Mamunigal-20 verses in praise of Ramanuja, known as Kripamatra-prasannacharya. The numbers flow, as smoothly as in the original composition, and are as mellifluous and soul-stirring and faithfully convey all the rare ideas. Each verse is followed by a short note as commentary, which explains, in the traditional manner, the significance of the various epithets and the fundamental concepts which lead to devotion, with appropriate quotations from sources of eminence. To cite an example, the significance of the words 'Rajahamsa', 'Bringaraja', 'Mitra' and 'Charanam, in the second verse, is explained properly. Stotras in Sanskrit by great devotees like Sri Kuresa, Sri Parasara Bhatta and Sri Vedantha Desika are great sources of inspiration and such treasures of untold value must soon be exposed to the common man, not only in India but everywhere, in the east and west. I heartily congratulate Sri Satyamurthi Iyengar on this attempt and wish that he attempts more such useful works. I wish that this book is printed soon and gets a circulation everywhere in the world so that man may understand, to some extent, the height of *guru-sishya bhava* attained in this glorious land of ours.

(sd.) T. S. Rajagopalan

‘YATHIRAJA VIMSATI’

(यतिराजविंशति)

INTRODUCTION

Saint Vara Vara Muni, the last of the ‘Poorvacharyas’, that grand galaxy of preceptors, was known as Alagiya Manavala Nayanar, before he took to be holy order of Sanyasa. One day, his immediate preceptor (Acharya) Thiruvoimozhippillai (Srisailesar), while meditating on the great qualities of Saint Ramanuja, pondered over those stanzas of Thiruvarangathamudanar (Amudanar of Arangam) depicting Ramanuja as a staunch devotee of Saint Nammazhvar (Maaran), proclaiming to the inhabitants of this wide world, end to end, the great glory of the Azhvar’s hymns and running riotous with the joy spouting from those hymns like unto the intoxication of an elephant in rut. This, in turn, led Srisailesar to think in terms of raising a fitting memorial for Sri Ramanuja, right in the birth place of Nammazhvar (Azhvar Thirunagari). This took concrete shape soon thereafter. A temple was built and the Image of Ramanuja installed therein, duly consecrated. The surrounding streets, named as “Sri Ramanuja Chaturvedi Mangalam”, were permanently inhabited, exclusively by the ardent worshippers of Ramanuja.

The zealous disciple, Alagiya Manavala Nayanar, was called upon by Srisailesar to stay in this new colony and look after the daily routine of the temple. Nayanar’s extra-ordinary devotion to this great cause earned the unstinting approbation of Srisailesar, who started calling him as “Yatheendra Pravanar”, signifying the enormous love and devotion borne by him for Saint Ramanuja, the Prince of ascetics-a name which soon gained currency and became wide-spread. Srisailesar did not stop at that. At his behest, Nayanar composed twenty Sanskrit slokas in adoration of Ramanuja, known as “Yathiraja Vimsati”. In the penultimate sloka, “Sreeman Yateendra ! tava divya padaabja sevaam” (श्रीमन्मतीन्द्र ! तव दिव्यपदाब्जसेवां) the author has gratefully acknowledged the grace galore of his loving

Master (Srisailanatha), which alone enabled the former to worship the lotus feet of Sri Ramanuja unremittingly. The author's profession of love and depth of devotion for Saint Ramanuja are very much in evidence in the fourth sloka, which keeps the hymnographer rivetted to the Great Acharya by word, deed and thought.

Nayanar's co-disciples composed a verse to commemorate the birth of these twenty slokas, eulogising the hymnographer and his hymns, which could sustain the vast multitude of devotees and make them flourish. As regards the grace and sweetness of these slokas, the reader will, apart from his or her own enjoyment, do well to refer to Sri Prativadi Bhayankaram Anna's 'Varavaramni Satakam' wherein he has paid glowing tributes to the grandeur of these laudatory hymns. Some might, however, question the propriety of Nayanar, himself an incarnation of Ramanuja, extolling Ramanuja and reducing himself to abject humility c. f. slokas 6 to 15. The answer to this is that this is quite in keeping with the tenor of any Avatar c. f. Sri Rama, an incarnation of Bhagavan Narayana, worshipping the idols of Narayana (i. e.) Lord Ranganatha—"Sahapatnya Visalakshi Narayanamupagamar" "सहपत्न्या विलक्षि नारायणमुपागमत्. It is noteworthy that the author desires to move from one extreme to the other, that is, from the utter distraction of sensual pleasures to utter devotion unto the one who stands last in the chain of Sri Ramanuja's devotees, vide sloka 16. The author's implicit faith in Saint Ramanuja, as the sole Support and the great Redeemer, is fully reflected in the last three slokas.

Here then is a string of stanzas twenty,
Hymns bespeaking the sweet bounty
Of Sri Ramanuja, the ascetic Prince,
Deep from the heart that doesn't mince,
Of Manavala Mamuni, the votary *par excellence*.

S. SATYAMURTHI.

यः स्तुति यतिपतिप्रसादनीं व्याजहार यतिराजविशतिम्
तं प्रपन्नजनचातकाम्बुदं नोमि सौम्यवरयोगि पुङ्गवम्

Salutation to Manavala Mamuni, the elixir
(1)
of Prapannas, the great Composer
of 'Yatiraja Vimsati', the regaler
of Saint Ramanuja's heart of grace galore.

- (1) Those who pursue the path
of loving surrender unto the
Lord's redemptive grace and confidently
repose in His sweet lap

Note :— Although 'Yatiraja Vimsati' was composed before the author
took to the holy order of Sanyasa, this invocatory sloka came up
only after the author became an ascetic and hence the salutation
to Saint Varavara muni. (सौम्यवरयोतिपुङ्गवम्)

Sloka : 1,

श्रीमाधवाङ्घ्रिजलजह्वनित्यसेवा
प्रेमाविलासयपराङ्कुशपादभक्तम्
कामादिदोष हरमात्मपदा श्रितानां
रामानुजं यतिपतिं प्रणमामि मूघ्नी

Bow do I unto Ramanuja, the king of ascetics,
Who, his votaries delivers from sinful love etcetera,
And adores the feet of Nammazhvar, who meditates,
On the lovely lotus feet of the Lord with amazing love.

Note:—(1) Ramanuja's excellence has several facets, but the chief among
them was his adoration of Saint Nammazhvar-'Parankusa'
who was like unto a *goad* (1) weaning round his spiritual

antagonists through his scintillating hymns, and (2) making the Lord Himself pliable, enraptured by his sweet, divine love-laden hymns.

- (2) And what about the Azhwar (Parankusa) ? His love unto the Lord was too deep, rather bewildering—Prema avilasaya (प्रेम आविलाशय)
- (3) कामादिदोषहरं :—Mark this expression. Instead of saying कामादिहरं, it is said कामादिदोषहरं, thereby indicating that love, anger etc., each by itself is not sinful and could be a virtue, if love is shown to God and His devotees and the anger is directed against their enemies—What is sought to be discarded through Sri Ramanuja's grace is the *sinful type of love, anger etc.*
- (4) प्रणमामि मूर्ध्ना Bowing is ofcourse bending of the head in salutation and yet the word मूर्ध्ना (by head) has also been added just to signify that the head has been given to us only to bow before the Lord and it is only by bowing, the head can prove its worth and vindicate its functional utility.

Sloka : 2

श्री रङ्गराजचरणाम्बुजराजहंसं
श्रीमत्पराकुशपदाम्बुज भृङ्गराजम्
श्रीमदृनाथपरकालमुखान्जमित्रं
श्रीवत्सचिह्नचरणं यतिराजमीडे

I adore Yatiraja, the refuge of Koorathazhvan,
The steadfast Bee on Nammalvar's lovely lotus feet,
The majestic SWAN reposing in Lord Ranganatha's lotus feet,
The glorious Sun that blossoms forth lotuses like Perialvar and
Thirumangai Alvar.

Notes :— In the preceding sloka, the poet wished to make his head worth its while by bowing unto Ramanuja and now the tongue is sought to fulfil its due purpose by singing the praise of that king of ascetics (Yatiraja). Note the words underlined, viz, *Bee, Swan* and *Sun*. Ramanuja has been referred to in this manner in keeping with the usage in the Divyaprabandham where the Azhvans, unable to stand their separation from their most beloved Lord, employ bees, swans etc. as their emissaries to carry messages to the Lord, which, in essence, would denote only the great Acharyas interceding between the frail humans, at this feeble end and the Super-abundant

Benefactor at the other end. It is particularly appropriate to refer to Ramanuja as :

- (1) *Swan*-abiding for ever at the lotus feet of Lord Ranganatha, even as the Rajahamsa dwells in the lotus flower;

Even as the swan is endowed with the peculiar faculty of separating milk from water, Ramanuja could highlight the salient features of the Sastras (Scriptures), eschewing the bewildering maze of relatively non-essential aspects;

Even as the Lord appeared as a swan to disseminate the Vedas, Ramanuja propagated the Sastras among the vast multitude of his disciples;

Even as the Swan is terribly averse to staying on marshy land, Ramanuja would not allow himself to be bogged down by the slushy terrain of worldly life (c. f. stanza 100 of Thiruviruttam) and, therefore, became a 'Paramahamsa';

Even as the swan is said to imitate the elegant gait of the womenfolk, c. f. Peria Thirumozhi 6-5-5, Ramanuja emulated the Divine Mother, Sri Maha Lakshmi, the unfailing intercessor between the 'Jiva' and God, pleading effectively with the former and enticing the latter into admission of the former unto the latter's protective fold c. f. Vedanta Desika's "Ukthe Rangee nijamapi-padam desika desakamshee", denoting Ramanuja's part in securing salvation for all his votaries, from Lord Ranganatha.

Similar comparisons between the Swan and Ramanuja could be multiplied.

- (2) *Bee*-drawn to the honey-like sweet qualities of Saint Nammalvar even as the bee hankers after the honey in the lotus flower; like unto the perennial humming of the bees, Ramanuja was always reciting the mellifluous hymns of Thiruvoimozhi.

and (3) *Sun*-blossoming forth the lotus flower—here, two Azhvars have been mentioned, in particular, namely, Periazhvar and Thirumangai Azhvar, as the lotus flowers being

lit up by Ramanuja, the Sun. The former Azhvar established the supremacy of Lord Vishnu over all the other Deities and also indulged in disinterested love of God for God's sake, praying for His well-being instead of his own, while the latter Azhvar built the gigantic temple at Srirangam with its colossal towers and turrets, spacious mantaps etc. By following in their footsteps and perpetuating those very activities, Ramanuja pleased them so much that their flowery faces brightened up like the lotus blooming at the sight of the morning Sun. Such a response to 'Ramanuja divakara' could well be the case with all the other Azhvans and the selective mention of the two Azhvans could be taken as their standing for the entire galaxy of Azhvans, the fountain-source of inspiration for Ramanuja.

Sloka : 3

वाचा यतीन्द्र ! मनसां वपुषा च युष्मत्
पादारविन्दयुगलं भजतां गुरुणाम्
कूराधिनाथकुरु केशमुखाद्यपुंसां
पादानुचिन्तनपरस्सततं भवेयम्

Oh, King of ascetics ! let me for ever meditate
On the feet of Preceptors like Koorathazhvan,
Thirukkurugaipiran Pillan and others, who, by word, deed and
thought,
Worship your lotus feet, ever and anon.

Notes : This is in keeping with the tenor of the sloka in Mukunda Mala-

त्वदभृत्यभृत्यपरिचारक मृत्यभृत्यभृत्यस्यभृत्य इति मां स्मर लोकनाथ !

Tvad bhritya bhritya paricharaka bhritya
bhritya bhrityasya bhritya iti maam smara Lokanatha !
c.f. also sloka, 16 below, where this solicitude for serving
Ramanuja's ardent devotees has found its fullest expression.

Sloka : 4

नित्यं यतीन्द्र ! तव दिव्यवस्स्मृती मे
सक्तं मनो भक्तु वाग्गुणकीर्तनेसौ
कृत्यं च दास्यकरणं तु करद्वयस्य
वृत्त्यन्तरेस्तु विमुखं करणत्रयं च

Oh, Yatindra ! let my *mind* stand transfixed for ever
 In your physical charm exquisite, and may my power
 Of *speech* concentrate on recounting your qualities auspicious;
 Let my pair of *hands* be engaged in your exclusive service
 And these triple faculties be shut against everything else.

Notes : By gunakirtan (गुण कीर्तन) is meant the laudation of Ramanuja's 'Daya' or compassion of unlimited dimensions, standing right in the vanguard of the vast array of his auspicious qualities.

Well, it was all right when the hymographer wished to keep his mind rivetted to the incessant contemplation of the exquisite charm of Ramanuja's physical form and again, when he resolved to keep on singing the praise of the Master's auspicious qualities. But how would it be possible for him to render bodily service unto him that had departed from this abode and gone back to the Celestium long ago? But then, even this can very well go on, in the Arccha (iconic) state.

The complete and constant rapport between him and Ramanuja, in every possible manner, having been directly emphasised, that wish is only reinforced in the last line by the indirect method of saying that the author's mind, word and deed should eschew every thing else.

Sloka : 5

अष्टाक्षराख्य मन्त्रराजपदत्रयार्थनिष्ठां ममाग्र वितराद्य यतीन्द्र नाथ !
 शिष्टाग्रगम्य जनसेव्यभवत्पदाब्जे हृष्टास्तु नित्यमनुभूय ममास्य बुद्धिः

Oh, Yatindra, my Lord ! please grant unto me, now and here,
 Steadfast devotion to the meanings of the three syllables
 Of the eight-lettered TIRUMANTRA and let me for ever
 Revel in the enjoyment of your lotus feet, indeed adorable
 By the illustrious stalwarts heading the ranks of the righteous.

Notes : (a) TIRUMANTRA—the Manu Raja or Mantra Raja
 —“*Aum Namō Narayanaya*”

By पदत्रयार्थनिष्ठा (Padatrayartanishta) is meant steadfast devotion to the triple meanings of the said Mantra, namely, subservience to none but the Lord, dependence on Him solely and service unto Him and His devotees.

In the preceding sloka, service was prayed for and as it is the quintessence of 'Tirumantra', the poet's mind at once turned on

this Mantra and he prays to the great Master (Ramanuja) to vouchsafe to him the requisite devotion to translate into practice the triple meanings yielded by the said Mantra, as above, with this difference that Ramanuja would take the place of the Lord in so far as the poet is concerned.

Sloka : 6

अल्पापि मे न भवदीय पदाब्जभक्तिश्शब्दादिभोग रुचिरन्वहमेघते हा
मत्यापमेव हि निदानममुष्य नान्यत्तद्धारयार्यं यतिराज ! दयैकसिन्धो !

Oh, gem of a preceptor and a veritable sea of compassion !
Unto your lotus feet there isn't in me the slightest devotion,
But, alas ! my attachment to pleasures sensual grows intense;
Pray deliver me from the sole cause of all these, my sins.

Notes :— To a query whether the service prayed for in the preceding slokas does not accrue to the Poet, as a matter of course, by virtue of his exemplary devotion to the Great Master, the poet recounts, from this sloka onwards, his own numerous shortcomings, which could preponderate as serious impediments to the influx of his Master's Grace. In “मे भवदीयपदाब्जभक्तिः अल्पापि”, “भवदीयपदाब्ज”, could be taken to mean “at your lotus feet”, invoking the samanadhikarana samasa or “at the lotus feet of your devotees like Koorathazhvan, Mudaliandan etc.” calling into play the vyatikarana samasa.

Sloka : 7

वृत्या पशुर्नरवपुस्त्वहमीहशोपि
श्रुत्यादिसिद्धनिकिलात्मगुणाश्रयोऽयम्
इत्यादरेण कृतिनोऽपि मिथः प्रवक्तुं
अद्यापि वञ्चनपरोऽन्य यतीन्द्र ! वर्ते

Oh Yatindra ! I am a veritable animal in human form,
Considering my code of conduct; I am still here an imposter,
Making even knowledgable persons zealously take me as the
repository
Of all qualities, good and soulful, true to vedic norms.

Notes :— The self-denunciation, which commenced in the preceding sloka, goes on, in this and the succeeding slokas.

“Vrithya pasuh etc.”—“Though born of human parents, with a human form, I am little better than a beast on account of my indisciplined way of life, eating and other habits. And yet, I

masquerade before the outside world as the standard-bearer of all the good qualities, one should possess according to the Scriptures.

‘अयम्’ (ayam) refers to the way, the beholders point to the poet as ‘this man’, the very embodiment of all that is enjoined by the vedic texts.

Sloka : 8

दुःखावहोऽहमनिशं तव दुष्टचेष्टः
शब्दादिभोगनिरतदशरणागताख्यः
त्वत्पादभक्त इव शिष्टजनोद्यमध्ये
मिथ्याचरामि यतिराज ततोस्मि मूर्खः :

Oh Yatiraja ! ‘I am indeed rash and impetuous,
Committing base deeds, steeped in sensual pleasures,
Yet pretending to be a prapanna, and amidst the righteous,
Masquerading boldly as a great devotee of yours.

(1) One who pursues the path of loving surrender unto the Lord’s Grace and protection.

Notes :— My Lord, Yatiraja ! is it not the height of rashness on my part to keep on wounding your heart by my paradoxical behaviour, outwardly professing all love for you and playing the imposter (as a great Prapanna) but actually given to bad ways, steeped in sensual pleasures ?

दुःखावहोऽहं would mean “I am inflicting pain in your mind.” Actually, this pain, in so far as Sri Ramanuja is concerned, is पर दुःख दुःखित्वं, feeling grieved over the sad plight of others and is tantamount to ‘Daya’ or commiseration. The poet thus becomes the object of Ramanuja’s ‘Daya’,

Sloka : 9

नित्यं त्वहं परिभवामि गुरुं च मन्त्रं
तद्देवतामपि न किञ्चिदहो बिभेमि
इत्थं शठोप्यशठवद्भवदीयसङ्घे
घृष्टश्चरामि यतिराज ततोस्मि मूर्खः :

Oh Yatiraja ! I am really rash and yet not remorseful a bit,
Flouting daily the preceptor and his teachings sacred,
Straying away from the Deity enshrined in the Mantras taught,
And alas ! still daring enough to parade
In the assembly of your votaries, as one truly devout.

Notes :— Question; What is meant by flouting the preceptor ?

Answer (1) Not living up to what was taught by him,
and (2) Spilling all that sacred knowledge, gathered from the
preceptor, before the sceptical and the impious, who
will treat it all lightly or with scant respect, like
pearls before swine.

Again, the offence against the Mantras, taught by the Preceptor,
is two—fold, Viz,

Not remembering the real meanings imparted and, on the top of
that, misinterpreting the Mantras, and

Disregard of the Deity consecrated by the Mantras, manifesting
itself in ungodly pursuits, due to lack of devotion.

घृष्टश्चरामि is the more ancient and correct usage as against
हृष्टश्चरामि, which is found in some texts—the latter meaning “I strut
about delighting in deceiving people in this manner”

Sloka : 10

हा हन्त हन्त मनसा क्रियया च वाचा
योहं चरामि सततं त्रिविधा पचारान्
सोहं तवाप्रियकरः प्रियकृद्धदेवं
कालं नयामि यतिराज ! ततोस्मि मूर्खः

Oh Yatiraja ! my behaviour is indeed outrageous !

Rash am I, ever indulging in triple transgression

Against God, His devotees and the Acharyas gracious,

And passing time thus, still do I, as your loving servant, feign.

Notes : त्रिविधापचारान् : The triple transgression comprises:—

- (i) Offence against God by way of regarding Maha Vishnu
as on a par with other minor Deities, treating lightly His
incarnations as Rama and Krishna and looking upon them
as no better than mere human beings and irreverent attitude
towards the Lord's iconic (Arccha) manifestation, thinking
in terms of the material of which the idol is made, thereby
detracting from the awe and reverence due to be shown to
'Arccha' as the living presence of God;
- (ii) Animated by conceit, greed and selfishness, throwing offence
at the Lord's devotees,
- and (iii) Being totally averse to contacts with the Lord and His
devotees like Hiranya kasipu of yore, the sworn enemy of
Lord Vishnu.

In the last category would also fall transgressions known as Asahyapachara (intolerable or unpardonable sins) committed against the Acharyas (preceptors).

The phrase “ततोस्मि मूर्खः” has been repeated thrice, from the 8th sloka onwards, to indicate the intensity of the Poet’s rashness—‘thrice impetuous’, the very opposite of ‘thrice blessed’ !

Sloka : 11

पापे कृते यदि भवन्ति भयानुतापलज्जाः
पुनः करणमस्य कथं घटेत
मोहेन मे न भवतीह भयादिलेशः
तस्मात्पुनः पुनरर्घं यतिराज ! कुर्वे

Oh Yতিরaja ! sins I keep committing in succession,
For, steeped in nescience, I have no compunction,
Fear or remorse which precludes the commission
Of sins, again and again, in such wretched fashion.

Notes :—(I) In this world of darkness and delusion, one is prone to commit sins. Nevertheless, realisation of sins already committed could excite fear of punishment and induce a sense of shame, remorse or repentance, which might restrain one from the commission of further sins. The poet, however, says in his forthright submission to his Master, Sri Ramanuja, that even this restraining influence is totally absent in his (Poet’s) case and he, therefore, goes on committing sins. What has been left unsaid in this Sloka but has to be understood is that, to such a one, the Master’s redemptive grace is the only hope for salvation.

(II) Speaking about the sense of remorse and repentance, the following anecdote, referred to in ‘Srivachanabhushanam’, the famous work of Sri Pillai Lokacharya, will reinforce the point.

One Pillai Pillai Azhvan, a disciple of Sri Koorathazhvan, though of good descent, great erudition and learning, was found to be arrogant and aggressive, throwing offence at the Bhagavatas (devotees).

Koorathazhvan, well known for his tender solicitude, realised the abysmal depth of spiritual degeneration into which the disciple was getting himself buried, despite his vast learning, and hit upon a plan to retrieve him. On an auspicious day, when grfts are offered for expiation of one’s

sins, Koorathazhvan approached the disciple in question, just after the latter had finished his bath and demanded of him an oblation. The startled disciple said that there was nothing he had to offer to his Great Master and yet the latter insisted that the former should resolve over a handful of water thrown into the river that he would thenceforward desist from offending the Bhagavatas by word, deed or thought. There was immediate compliance from the disciple. But then, by sheer force of habit, sometime later on, the disciple thought ill of a devotee and at once realised that he had thereby broken the pledge he had taken before his Master, and was thus damned beyond redemption. So deep and intense was his feeling of repentance and sense of shame that he dared not appear before the Master. The compassionate Master won't brook separation from the disciple, sought him out, sized up the position and addressed the following words to him :—

“I am exceedingly happy to take note of your deep and sincere repentance for the mere entertainment of an evil thought, even before it could manifest itself in word and deed. You take it from me that the Lord will also be immensely pleased and forgive you. I am sure, you will desist from inflicting bodily injury on devotees, for fear of punishment at the hands of the king. And what now remains is only offence thrown out by word of mouth and it will suffice if you put an effective curb on it.”

Sloka : 12

अन्तर्बहिस्सकलवस्तुषु सन्तमीशं
अन्धः पुरस्स्थितमिवाहमवीक्षमाणः
कन्दर्पवश्यहृदयस्सततं भवामि
हन्त त्वदग्रगमनस्य यतीन्द्र ! नाहं:

Oh Yatindra ! always sex-ridden, I just can't comprehend
The Lord pervading all things, inside out,
Like unto one born blind, unable to apprehend
Things right in front, and so, even to appear before you am I unfit.

Notes :—(I) In the preceding Slokas, the poet had confessed to the commission, by him, of an endless chain of sins. Assuming that he is thereupon questioned as to how he could at all perpetrate sins despite the prying eyes of the Lord, Who is all-pervading and thus a constant witness to all our actions, the answer is being furnished, as above, in this Sloka. Even as the congenitally blind can not see things right in front, the poet could hardly perceive the existence of God. Had he but seen the Lord, he might have been weaned away from every thing else but owing to the complete absence of

such a vision, he automatically wallows in the sty of sensual pleasures, day in and day out (सततं)

“How can I, such a sinner, who is unfit to present himself before his Master, ever attain him ?”

Sloka : 13

तापत्रयीजनितदुःखनिपातिनोपि
देहस्थितौ मम रुचिस्तु न तन्निवृत्तौ
एतस्य कारणमहो मम पापमेव
नाथ ! त्वमेव हर तद्यतिराज ! शीघ्रम्

Oh Yatiraja, my Master ! pray deliver me very soon
From my Sins which tempt me to tend with loving care,
This body, albeit the home of miseries charged with the triad of pain,
Instead of seeking means of extrication from this snare.

Notes : (1) तापत्रयी The three categories of pain to which we, in this world, are exposed, are :

(a) *Adhyatmika*

Sufferings both physical and mental, the source of which is to be found within ourselves (intra-organic)

(b) *Adhi-bhautika*

Pain, the source of which lies outside of us (extra-organic), such as sufferings caused by birds, beasts, devils, fellow-beings, atmospheric changes of extreme heat and extreme cold, radio-active fall-outs etc.

(c) *Adhi-Deivika*

Sufferings due to causes beyond human control, like cataclysmic forces of nature. volcanic eruption, earthquake etc.

The release from all these sources of sufferings is either consciously or unconsciously sought after by every Individual, for relief from pain is one of the major activities of mankind. And yet, the poet says here that he does not fall in with the normal trend, as above, because of his massive sins which make him hang on to this body, willy-nilly, with stupid tenacity. It, therefore, behoves the Great Master, Ramanuja to extricate the hymnographer from this unenviable mesh.

Sloka : 14

वाचाभगोचर महागुण देशिकाग्रय
कूराघिनाथ कथिताखिल नैच्यपात्रम्
एषोहमेव न पुनर्जंगतीदृशस्तत्
रामानुजाय ! करुणैव तु मद्गतित्ते

Oh Ramanuja, my preceptor ! there can be no better person
For the bestowal of your Grace than I, the only one
Bristling with all those traits claimed as his own,
In sheer humility, by Koorathazhvan, the Savant great,
Full of auspicious qualities, hard to enumerate.

Notes : The great qualities of head and heart of the illustrious Koorathazhvan are too numerous to be listed and are thus literally beyond words (वाचागोचरम्). Nevertheless, he resorted to self-denunciation (नैय्यानुसन्दानं), out of sheer humility. The poet owns here that all those base qualities, foisted on himself by Azhvan, rightly belonged to him (the poet).

The terminal phraseology कर्णैवतुमद्गतिस्ते can be interpreted to mean “Your Grace can be unravelled to its fullest length only in my case and in no other, and it has, therefore, to seek refuge in me alone, there being no worthier recipient, none other so badly off as to need Your grace, in full, for his redemption.

c. f. Stanza 48 of Ramanuja Nootrandadi echoing the same sentiments.

Sloka : 15

शुद्धात्मयामुनगुरुत्तम कूरनाथ
भट्टारख्यदेशिकवरोक्त समस्तनैच्यम्
अद्यास्त्यसङ्कुचितमेवमयीह लोके
तस्माद्यतीन्द्र ! कर्णैव तु मद्गतिस्ते

Oh Yatindra ! Your grace can have no recipient
Worthier than me and so am I the sole refuge for it,
For, now in this world, all those degrading traits
Professed, in all humility, by Yamuna, Azhvan
And Parasara Bhattar, all gems of purest ray serene,
Actually lurk in their full-complement in me and me alone.

Notes :— In the preceding Sloka, the poet had referred to the self-denunciation, resorted to, out of sheer humility, by Koorathazhvan and pointed out that the cap actually fitted his (poet's) own head and not that of Koorathazhvan, who, as a matter of fact, was spotlessly clean, the repository of innumerable auspicious qualities. And now, there were other great Acharyas like Yamuna (Alavandar) and Parasara Bhattar who had also resorted to similar self-condemnation in their supplication to the Lord.

It is now clarified by the poet that, in reality, all those Acharyas were of immaculate purity and all the failings professed by them were not at all in them, but were in him and him alone, in their full strength, without the slightest diminution. As grace can be exercised only in redeeming the Sinner, the sins are unto grace like the grist unto the grinding mill. The grinding mill of Sri Ramanuja's grace can be worked up to its full capacity only when it is fed by sins of the dimensions possessed by the poet, who singly lays claim to all the sins professed by the three great Acharyas, referred to in this sloka.

Sloka : 16

शब्दादिभोगविषया रुचिरस्मदीया
नष्टा भवत्विह भवद्दयया यतीन्द्र !
त्वद्दासदासगणनाचरमावधौ यस्
तद्दासतैकरसता अविरता ममास्तु

Oh Yatindra ! may your sweet grace destroy my desire
For sensual pleasures and kindle in me instead, the desire,
Keen and continual, to be a vassal unto him that stands last
In the long chain of your devotees, sure and steadfast.

Notes :— As already stated in the introduction, the poet was conferred by his Acharya, Srisailesar, the title of 'Yatindra pravanar', meaning "Ardent lover of Yatindra". In this sloka, it is seen that, by his own inclination, the poet wants to be "Yatindra pravana pravana pravana pravanar"—Lover of him that loves the lover of the lover of Yatindra (Ramanuja). 'Pravanya' would denote love, too deep for words.

Sloka : 17

श्रुत्यप्रवेद्यनिजदिव्यगुणस्वरूप
प्रत्यक्षतामुपगतस्त्विह रङ्गराजः
वश्यस्सदा भवति ते यतिराज ! तस्मात्
शक्तस्त्वकीय जनपापविमोचने त्वम्

Oh Yতিরaja ! you have the power to root out the sins
Of Your votaries, as you always have the backing
Of Lord Ranganatha, who is right here, making
Himself visible in this land where there's none
Discerning enough, to be drawn unto Him,
Whose qualities and attributes, the Vedas proclaim.

Notes :— There seems to have been a dialogue going on between the hymnographer and Sri Ramanuja. The latter would appear to have queried the former as to why he was making unto him all the submission, as in the preceding slokas, instead of to the Supreme Lord, who alone is the redeemer of all ills and evils, we are heir to. And here is the reply:

“The Supreme Lord, who can be comprehended only through the scriptures, as taught by the Acharyas, has, in His unbounded grace, made Himself visible to the naked eye, in this land of dark nescience, as Lord Ranganatha. Even so, He is there to do your bidding and, therefore, it would be enough if I petitioned to you”. The poet seems to have gathered this fact from the ‘Saranagati Gadya’ of Sri Ramanuja and other anecdotes. In ‘Saranagati Gadya’ one can see that all the prayers of Ramanuja were granted by the Lord without any exception. An interesting anecdote, which will drive home the point is :—

One day, a Dhobi, who used to wash the clothes worn by the Idol (Lord Ranganatha) laundered them neatly and showed them first to Sri Ramanuja. Very pleased with the extra-fine laundering by the devoted washerman, Ramanuja took him straight to the Divine presence of Lord Ranganatha and requested the latter to look at the nice bit of work done by the washerman. The Lord not only signified his approval but went a step further and said “for the sake of this fellow, we now grant reprieve to that other washerman who offended us during our Avatar as Krishna”. It may be recalled here that, when Krishna and Balaram went to Mathura, escorted by Akroora, the dhobi, who washed the clothes of Kamsa, was passing along with a donkey-load of laundered clothes of the royalty. He, however, declined to supply the clothes demanded by Krishna and Balaram. For that offence, then committed (nearly 4000 years earlier), the Lord, in His iconic Form as Lord Ranganatha, now granted him pardon through the good offices of Sri Ramanuja.

Again, in his ‘Thiruppalli Yezhuchi, Thondaradippodi Azhvar refers to Lord Ranganatha as the one who, as Rama, routed the Rakshasas and helped Sage Viswamitra to put through his ‘Yaga’ successfully. If Rama volunteered to do the bidding of Sage Viswamitra, who was a strange admixture of good and bad traits, would it not go without saying that, as Lord Ranganatha, He would be far more willing to serve one of Ramanuja’s unalloyed excellence ?

कालत्रयेपि करणत्रयनिर्मिताति
पापक्रियस्य शरणं भगवत्क्षमैव
सा च त्वयैव कमलास्मरोर्षितायत्
क्षेमस्य एव हि यतीन्द्र भवच्छित्तानाम्

Oh Yatiraja ! to him that commits sins gruesome,
At all times, past, present and future and by word, deed
And thought, the Lord's forgiveness is the only asylum;
And again, that remission was by you prayed for at the feet
Of Lord Ranganatha, the prayer that does your votaries redeem,

Notes :— This sloka only reinforces the point made out by the poet in the preceding sloka, namely, Lord Ranga Raja is there, ever ready to fulfil the desire of Yatiraja (Ramanuja), altogether dispensing with the need for direct approach to the former by the votaries of the latter. It was in the Tamil month of Panguni, presided over by the star 'Uttara palguni', that Shri Ramanuja prayed before the Divine couple, for the exercise of the much-needed clemency for the salvation of the teeming millions of their Subjects. Pat came the boon, an assurance from the Lord vouchsafing salvation unto Ramanuja, all those who had spiritual connections with him, their votaries and so on. It was this boon that was referred to by Sriman Nigamanta Desika in his, "Nyasatilakam"—

“Srutva varam tadanubandha madaavalipte nityam praseeda
Bhagavan mayi Ranganatha !”

The meaning of the complete Sloka is :—“Oh Lord Ranganatha ! I have heard of the boon You conferred upon Sri Ramanuja, assuring him of its certain fulfilment by you, quoting reference to the Charama Slokas delivered earlier by you to Vibhishana and Arjuna, during your Avatars as Rama and Krishna. Verily, I am proud of my connection with Sri Ramanuja and I beseech you to be always merciful to me.” The mercy invoked here by Vadanta Desika is by way of pacifying the Lord for having indirectly told Him that salvation need not be granted by Him, as it had already been guaranteed to him through his connection with Sri Ramanuja. Such was the depth of Desika's devotion to Ramanuja.

And now, in the present context, the same aspect is closely dwelt upon. कालत्रयेपि etc., For sins committed by all means (word,

deed and thought) and at all times, no amount of atonement or expiation will be of any avail. The Lord's forgiveness is the only solvent and this forgiveness, we don't have to pray for from the Lord afresh, it having been done by Sri Ramanuja for us, by proxy, long ago, and our redemption also guaranteed, there and then alone.

Sloka : 19

श्रीमन्यतीन्द्र ! तव दिव्यपदाब्जसेवां
श्रीशैलनाथचरुणापरिणामदत्ताम्
तावन्वहं मम विवर्धय नाय ! तस्याः
कामं विरुद्धमखिलं च निवर्तय त्वम्

My Lord Yatindra ! may you intensify, day in and out,
The service vouchsafed unto me, at thy lotus feet,
By the grace galore of Srisailanatha and root out
All those desires which against such service militate.

Notes :— As already mentioned in the introduction, these laudatory hymns were composed by Sri Alagiya Manavala Nayanar at the behest of his Acharya, Sri sailanatha, who had earlier installed the idol of Ramanuja and entrusted the ritualistic worship thereof to the dutiful disciple. The initiation having been done, as above, by his munificent Acharya, the poet now invokes the help of Sri Ramanuja, not only to foster the love already generated but also keep it out of bounds to influences which might detract from the single-minded, selfless devotion, longed for by the poet. It is significant that Sri Ramanuja is already well known as the foster-mother of Saint Nammazhvar's Thiruvoinozhi, which owed its survival and propagation to the loving care of Sri Ramanuja, rightly called the foster-mother of these seintillating hymns held on a par with the Vedas. And the poet prays to Ramanuja to foster likewise the love already kindled in the supplicant by his loving Master.

Here is an interesting discussion about the relative position of one's devotion to one's Guru (Acharya) vis-a-vis devotion to God. For those pre-eminent disciples like Satrugna, Madhurakavi Azhvar etc., who stood firmly riverted to their devotion to their Acharyas, to the exclusion of even God Himself, love of God could operate as an impediment. It can not, therefore, be ruled out that, in the list of adverse desires, sought to be excluded by the phraseology तस्या विरुद्धम् अखिलं कामं निवर्तय, has been included

‘love of God’, as well. But then, it might be asked why worship of God has not been given up by this category of devotees. The answer to this is that it is being resorted to, just to please the Acharya, who worships that God. Compare the attitude of Satrugna (Satrugno nitya satrugnah, (शत्रुघ्नो नित्य शत्रुघ्नः) who seldom turned in the direction of Rama, in order to persevere with his devotion to Bharata, but occasionally attended on Rama also, just to please Bharata. Among the Azhvars, Madhurakavi had the unique distinction of knowing no God other than Parankusa, (Saint Nammazhvar). These are called the Charamaparva nishtas, who are dearer to the Lord than those worshipping Him directly (Pratama parva nishtas).

Sloka : 20

विज्ञापनं यदिदमद्य तु मामकीनं
अङ्गीकुरुष्व यतिराज दयाम्बुराशे
अज्ञेयमात्मगुणलेश विवर्जितश्च
तस्मादनग्यशरणो भवतीति मत्वा

It behoves Thee, oh Yajirata, the ocean of compassion
To grant all my prayers in the current submission,
Seeing that I am ignorant and haven’t a little bit
Of spiritual attainment and thou art, therefore, my sole Support.

Notes :— In this concluding sloka, the poet requests Sri Ramanuja to grant all those prayers comprised in the several preceding slokas, commencing from the third sloka. Even if the Master did not open his mouth and say, in so many words, that the prayers have been granted, it would suffice if he took it to heart that the humble supplicant should be redeemed on the ground that he has none of the spiritual attainments and is, therefore, devoid of any support other than the Master, the sole Refuge. Again, there is no question of compulsion on the part of the poet, as the Master is, by nature, extremely generous, a veritable sea of compassion, and it was this great trait of the Master that induced the petitioner to make the submission contained in these slokas, in the sure and certain hope of favourable response. Speaking about the Grace galore of Sri Ramanuja, it is worth recalling the grouping made in aphorism 204 of “Acharya Hridayam” by Sri Alagiya Manavala Perumal Nayanar which says:—

“This sense of belonging, non-endurance of the spiritual degeneration of others and boundless compassion for straying humanity

are the unique traits of the Divine Mother (Sita), the illustrious Son (Prahlada), the dutiful Scion (Vibhishana), Saint Nammazhvar and his staunch follower, Sri Ramanuja”.

The main purpose of Sri Ramanuja’s re-incarnation as Srimad Vara Vara Muni (this hymographer) was to intensify the devotion to the great Preceptors, which had earlier abated considerably, with the possible risk of gradual extinction, and to put it back on its high pedestal. Devotion to the great galaxy of the ancient Preceptors, of whom Sri Ramanuja is the crest Jewel, is thus the key note of this as well as all other works of Srimad Vara Vara Muni c. f. ‘Arti Prabandham’ and ‘Upadesa Ratnamalai’.

“Blessed be the holy feet of
Manavala Mahamuni, the
Ya teendra Pravanar !”

S. Satyamarthi.

○ ○ ○

Yatiraja Vimsati

1	2	befere	before
1	3	be	the
10	12 from bottom	as on a	as on a
10	12 from bottom	hightly	lightly
10	10 from bottom	irreverent	irreverent
10	8 from bottom	turns	terms
11	last line	grfts	gifts
12	1	aftar	after
15	16	sens al	sensual
16	13 from bottom	ascorted	escorted
17	3	कमलास्मरो	कमलारमरो
17	4	क्षेमस्य	क्षेमस
18	8	श्रीशैलनाथचरुणा	श्रीशैलनाथकरुणा
19	15	विवर्जितश्च	विवर्जितश्च